

Africa Ministerial Pre- Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 63rd Session Zero Draft Outcome Document

3-6 February 2019

KEY MESSAGES AND STRATEGIES FOR CSW63 STRATEGIES FOR A UNIFIED POSITION AT CSW63 IN NEW YORK

Strategies for Gender Responsive Social protection

1. Background and Framing

We the Ministers of Gender/Women Affairs from Africa Member states met in Cairo and agreed on the following:

Substantive Gender Equality requires a fundamental transformation of economic, political, and social institutions, including the negative beliefs, norms and attitudes that shape them, at every level of society, from households to labour markets and from communities to local, national and global governance institutions and that the articulation of different forms of public and private investments can realize structural transformation necessary to realize gender justice and substantive equality. The CSW 63rd will call for an explicit commitment to developing the synergies and complementarities of social protection, public services and infrastructure and ensuring that they realize substantive equality to serve the needs of women and do not obstruct gender justice and equality. The limited access to social protection, quality social services, infrastructure, energy, ICT, and labour saving technology, coupled with the care responsibilities of women are placing women in an unfair position of structural inequality.

Women and girls living in poverty, isolation, deprivation and without access to basic social services, including quality education and health, infrastructure or work may become beneficiaries of social redistribution programs but they remain 'unprotected' by their access to these resources if social protection is a 'replacement' or alternative to just, adequate and universal access to services and infrastructure. Social protection, public services and infrastructure must thus be designed and implemented in ways that reflect the realities of where and how women live and work, and of their multiple roles. This requires coordination between sectors, given the interconnections between and among these policy areas in order to address women's *rights and dignity*

1.1. **Guiding Principles for Social Protection, Access to Public Services and Sustainable Infrastructure**

Member States are called upon to take action on **SDG 5** in the interlinked fields of social protection, public services, and sustainable infrastructure by recognizing the multiplicity of women's roles and their intersections; incorporating women's needs, interests, and priorities in decision-making processes; and transforming social and economic structures. The

principles listed can realize this goal and ensure that planning, investment, design, implementation and financing of these three interlinked fields support the cause of gender justice. The principles are:

- **Accessibility:** provision of information about available programs, services and infrastructure, as well as the physical accessibility of these;
- **Affordability:** receipt of benefits and use of services and infrastructure is not prohibited by cost;
- **Adaptability:** programs, services and infrastructure are suited to meet different positive cultural values and technological barriers (including literacy);
- **Gender-responsiveness:** programs, services and infrastructure do not rely on discriminatory gender norms, but should recognize and aim to transform their discriminatory outcomes (e.g. the unequal division of unpaid care work between women and men);
- **Quality:** governments strive to ensure that programs, services, and infrastructure are appropriate and safe, and do not discriminate on the grounds of sex social class or geographical location, among other factors;
- **Transparency:** all relevant information is made public and potential and current beneficiaries and service users have the right to access it;
- **Participation:** all categories of citizens –women, men, girls and boys especially the vulnerable including people with disability and the elderly and minorities are able to influence the outcomes of decision-making processes through democratic means;
- **Accountability:** all decision-making processes, policy making processes and implementation strategies are open and inclusive and accountable for efficient and effective response to gender equality and women and girls’ development.
- **Progressive realization, non-retrogression, and utilization of maximum available resource:** governments have an obligation to take steps, to the maximum of their available resources, to promote and protect economic and social rights over time; and that, to the extent possible, social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure are publicly funded, delivered and managed, and accountable to the public.
- **Rights based:** recognizes the primary responsibility of governments and that of women and girls as rights holders contributing to their own development.
- **Intergenerational and life course:** which recognizes impacts on women of all ages especially on young women and girls, elderly women, and women with disabilities as informed by the context and lived realities.

This agenda for action will optimize current efforts and investments in social protection, public services and infrastructure by making them gender –responsive and attuned to the needs and challenges of women and girls.

2. Strengthen the policy legal and institutional environment

- a. Guarantee that all social protection systems are rights based and are in line with international and regional human rights frameworks
- b. Strengthen the legal, administrative and programmatic protections for women and girls exposed to exploitative work arrangements, ensuring equal pay for work of equal value and supportive environment for women.
- c. Strengthen the Social Protection, Public Services and sustainable Infrastructure nexus: As policy coherence increasingly takes centre stage in the mid to long term and in the era of Sustainable Development Goals, governments in Africa will need to think systematically in establishing and strengthening links between social protection systems public services and sustainable infrastructure. Efforts to strengthen links between social protection interventions and development policies, present an opportunity to ensure effectively linking public service and infrastructure for purposes of achieving gender equality and women's economic empowerment.
- d. Establish Comprehensive and Integrated National Social Protection Systems and fully mainstream a gender perspective in social protection. Comprehensive social protection systems need to be gender-responsive to a) ensure they do not further exacerbate gender inequality and that they b) promote gender equality.
- e. Ensure that all infrastructure plans, policies and budgets are gender responsive, and promote affirmative procurement for women.
- f. Ensure better coherence across fiscal, policy and programming lines for gender responsive social protection, public services and infrastructure
- g. Institute and fully fund gender mainstreaming strategies in all sectors linked to social protection, public services and infrastructure supported by a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system which includes key stakeholders such as parliament.

3. Address gender gaps and biases in social protection

- a. Take measures to ensure gender parity in decision making for social protection.
- b. Expand and scale-up best practices in social protection programs and recognize innovations from Africa.
- c. Extend effective social protection systems to women and girls that are exposed to insecurity, conflict, post conflict situations, natural disasters, and humanitarian crises as well as violent extremism and work towards resolving the structural causes of violence against women and girls.
- d. Invest in social protection services for women and girl returnees, refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), as well as women that are victims of trafficking in persons, women engaged in cross border activities and labour exploitation, women and girls living with HIV, survivors of violence, FGM, and child early and forced marriages.

- e. Establish international labour agreements for African Countries engaged in labour export business and recruiting employing countries to ensure their protection from abuse and respect of their rights
- f. Ensure that gender-responsive social protection prioritises the most discriminated, most excluded, vulnerable, and the disempowered. Ensuring that social protection systems provide adequate support to those left furthest behind is critical to eliminating poverty and achieving a reduction in inequality, especially gender inequality towards establishing a pathway to sustainability.
- g. Put in place gender responsive social protection systems and programs for girls and women at different stages of the life course. Gender-responsive social protection includes adequate benefits to reach all vulnerable girls and protect them from multiple risks in particular teenage mothers and those who have been in child marriage. It also addresses the needs of pregnant women and new mothers, the linkages to health services, health insurance and health information, as well as affordable childcare options. Put in place health insurance affordable to all populations particularly for women and children. In addition, gender-responsive social protection takes into account the additional vulnerabilities and risks experienced by older women, including those that result from their longevity, the unequal distribution of unpaid work over the life course, and their patterns of paid work.
- h. Address gender inequalities in the world of work by protecting the rights of women workers and harnessing opportunities for extending coverage thus adequate provision of cash transfers and services to women with low pay, interrupted patterns of paid work and in informal work; and provide affordable and good quality child care and adopt mechanisms for the acquisition of appropriate equipment and information technologies to reduce the burdens of unpaid care work.
- i. Expand social protection services to reach vulnerable girls as a protective measure against early pregnancies, HIV, FGM, and early, forced child marriages and to provide education, protect them, and offer comprehensive social protection service to all affected other forms of training and education systems
- j. Reduce or completely eliminate co-payments and provide universal access to public services free of charge at the point of delivery and with appropriately subsidized, empowering and viable schemes for people who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations.
- k. Gender-based constraints related to access to basic utility finance, training, employment and entrepreneurship need to be integrated into Social Protection and Public Service Systems.
- l. Take advantage of the opportunities that new technologies offer to promote women's and girls' outcomes and tackle gender inequality. The emergence of new technologies present opportunities to integrate social protection and public services by: a) delivering social protection to people who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations' = especially women and persons with disability, b) making 'invisible' work

- undertaken by women visible; and c) linking women to financial services they were previously excluded from.
- m. Commit to gender parity in decisions making for social protection, public services and infrastructure

4. Transform public services for gender equality and women's empowerment

- a. Integrate women's empowerment into provision of public services as evidence shows that gender power relations affect access to important services and resources. A lack of control over financial resources and how they are used, limits women's access to public services
- b. Take appropriate measures in ensuring community resilience in the provision and the security of adequate public services in situations of natural disasters, emergencies, conflict and armed conflict and ensure the access of IDP's, refugees and migrants to such services.
- c. Address occupational segregation and ensure the labor rights of public service providers, especially women Ensure gender-responsive accessibility to public services across the life course, including simplification of eligibility requirements and bureaucratic procedures.
- d. Address time poverty experienced by women through investment in time saving technologies, quality collective care services and infrastructure that ensure that domestic and unpaid care work is reduced, recognised and redistribute quality collective care services d.
- e. Ensure universal access to education and health, including sexual and, reproductive health and reproductive rights according to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

5. Make infrastructure investment work for women and girls

- a. Address geographical barriers to access rural areas (including to reliable transport systems to access those services on a regular and emergency) and implement improvements through cooperation with the infrastructure sector.
- b. Through infrastructure policies, proactively include both women and men at the development stage in order to support more equitable access to infrastructure as well as benefit from it. More efforts are needed to involve women in the design and provision of contextually appropriate infrastructure.
- c. Offer new skills training, scaling up Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for increased employment opportunities and entrepreneurship opportunities for women through infrastructure projects that are based on newer sustainable technologies.
- d. Prioritize investments in gender-responsive public transportation especially road and rail, including walking and cycling infrastructure.

- e. Ease taxation policies or subsidize public transport in order to increase the supply and make it more affordable in both urban and rural areas
- f. Promote urban development policies that encourage the design of towns and cities taking into consideration the women's engagement in retail trade in the urban informal economy. Provide secure space in designated and fairly allocated markets that make adequate provision for vehicular and pedestrian transport, storage, security, electricity, water and sanitation facilities, refuse collection, facilities that are developed in consultation with women informal workers and are therefore adequate in coverage, quality, and affordability.
- g. Ensure the protection of infrastructure especially in situations of conflict, armed conflict and insecurity in line with the 1949 Geneva Conventions.
- h. Enable access to and affordability of quality integrated infrastructure for the prevention of violence against women and girls and their protection and secure their access to rehabilitation services.
- i. Ensure access by women and girls to new information and communication technologies to promote gender equality and integrate social protection services in a gender responsive manner.

6. Mobilize and equitably allocate Resources to strengthen accountability and improve evidence

- a. Expand domestic resource mobilisation through progressive taxation and other revenue sources to strengthen financing of social investment and gender-responsive budgeting and recognize the contribution of communities and diaspora bonds taking into account geographical disparities.
- b. Generate more and better quality gender responsive data. Investments in social protection policy and system programming would benefit from accompanying investments in disaggregated data and integrated information systems to a) better identify the challenges faced by girls and women and gender inequalities and to b) better understand what works under specific conditions
- c. Implement sustainable tax financed or social insurance schemes to cover all household members through the life course
- d. Develop financial resources to invest in scaling up gender-responsive, water infrastructure and augmenting technologies that have proven to be effective and efficient e.g. recycling rain and other water harvesting systems.
- e. Generate a fiscal base for gender-responsive investments in sustainable sanitation where current investments are not commensurate with identified need.
- f. Infrastructure financing should complement broader social protection and public service goals with the aim of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, poverty eradication and sustainable development.
- g. Promote citizen participation in monitoring and evaluation the funding and management of social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure

- h. Eliminate corruption and illicit financial flows and invest resources recovered in development activities including gender responsive social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure
- i. Establish a data base and collect and avail and use sex, age and location disaggregated data gender responsive social protection, public services and infrastructure
- j. Adhere to transparent and high-quality monitoring and evaluation procedures for gender responsive social protection, public services and infrastructure, including through parliaments and national human rights institutions.
- k. Create a code of conduct with clear sanctions for the exploitation of women and girls, for all sectors including private sector investors engaged in infrastructure development

We, African Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs pledge full commitment and support to regional and international agreements and Conventions ratified by Member States in the 63rd Session of the CSW.